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A

LETTER

FROM A

DISTINGUISHED LADY

IN

COVENT-GARDEN;

To a Certain

Young OFFICER Abroad.

Qui capit, ille facit.
Which is as much as to say,
Honi soit qui Mal y pense.



LONDON:

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LETTER

FROM A

DISTINGUISHED LADY

IN

CONFESSION

To a Gentleman

Young Officer Abroad.





A

LETTER, &c.

Noble S I R,

AS I have very little *to do*,
since the *Thirst of Glory*
called you from the Cloi-
sters of *Covent-Garden*, to the fa-
mous *fighting Fields of Flanders*,
I do not know how I can murder
an Hour better, than by telling you,
how *your Absence* and the *Loss of*
Business grieves me. Yet a sud-
den Thought almost checks my
Pen, (I should have said the Pen
of the Person who writes for me)

B

and

and tempts me to make a kind of an *Irish* Epistle of it, *by ending before I have begun*. Why should I write ill News to you, who have ten times as much of your own? Why in the *midst* of your *Sorrows* and *Disappointments* vex you with mine? Or to what End complain, that *Fatalities* reign in other Climates as well as *Flanders*? But then again, why should not I *complain*? It is all *I have left*; for sure I am that no cares have been *spared*, no pains *un-
tried*, to mend matters if they might have been mended. But, alas! I am as unfortunate as the Publick; and am like to make no more of *my Business*, than the *Nation* does of the *War*. Well, the Devil take the *French* and the *Brandy Merchant*; for I doubt between them both, we shall all be *undone*.

I very well remember, what *you* and some of *your Favourites* were pleased to say of *Women*; but was there ever a Woman so *false* as *Hope*, or so *deceitful* as *Fortune*? No, to be sure; in comparison of those *ideal Sluts*, even my *Irish Girls* are *Lucretia's*. When you first *honoured* me with your *Visits*, what *Notions* did I entertain of *Grandeur* and *Prosperity*; surrounded as I was by *Men of Title*, and supported by their *favourite Mistresses*, I scarce thought my Lady M——— my Betters, would hardly suffer a *Player* to enter my Doors, and stood as little in fear of a *Justice*, as if I had been a *Countess*. But lack-a-day, things are quite *changed*; I see few of these *great Folks* now, though I have reason to remember them by their *Names being in my Books*. All the Ladies

have left me, and are got into *Keeping* ; and if it were not for a *sly Citizen* now and then, I should not make a Bowl of Rack once in a Week. But every Dog (even the Females ones) has his Day, and I must be *contented*. But they say *Patience by Force* is a Remedy for a *mad one*, and therefore I have endeavoured to find out a *milder Remedy*.

While the Town is as thin as a *Place that fears a Siege*, and the People in it as *poor*, as if they had been lately *put under Contribution*, I console myself with the Thoughts, that my Lot is not *worse than yours*, and that we have both been equally *deceived*, and *balked in our Expectations*. Your *Harvest of Laurels* has proved as *insignificant* as my *Profits* ; your *Glory* has fallen as short as my *Gains* ; and why should I

rave

rave or blaspheme about the Matter, when upon Reflection, it appears there is so *little Difference* between *High Life* and *Low*, between your *sanguine Expectations* from the *Campaign*, and my *imaginary Dreams* of growing rich in a *Coffee-House*.

But what can be the Meaning of all this ? I fancy notwithstanding *your Crosses* and *mine* that *Vice* and *Valour* stand much as they did. To begin with what I understand *best*, which is the *former*. Undoubtedly Folks are not grown *better* than they were ; *Carnality* goes on *as much as ever*, though we are forced to turn *honest* in *Covent-Garden*. But all things alter ; and as the Philosophers say, for you must know that since the *Rakes* have left me, a parcel of *broken Wits* herd here, and from them I have picked up
this

this Reflection, that *Individuals must yield to Universals*. I can't tell how to explain this, but I believe I have applied it right ; you will judge better of it when I tell you, that the Huzzies I used to *live* by, have *stolen my Trade*, and have turned *Caterwalling* into a *regular Business* : In short there is not one of them now, but has a *commodious Lodging at least* ; nay, many of them have *little Houses*, where they carry on their *Affairs* with all the *Snugness* imaginable. Well ! these are *strange Times*. The Politicians say, that *Corruption is the Support of Government* ; some of the Parsons that use *Covent-Garden* affirm that *Infidelity is no Bar to Perment* ; and therefore why should I wonder, that in such an Age as this, an Acquaintance should be struck

struck up between *Oeconomy* and *Wenching*.

What say you, Sir? does not *Experience* tell you, that it is the same thing in *Flanders*? Did ever the *English Boobies* shew more of that *natural Boldness*, which I am told that *French Fellow Voltaire* calls *Ferocity*, than when you had your *Frolick* at *Fontenoy*? And yet did they ever shew it to *so little Purpose*? Well: to be sure I have taken all the Pains that a *poor Woman* could, to be at the *bottom of that Business*; and a *S——ch L——d* that was there, assures me, *that you had the same bad Luck as I*, and were absolutely undone by the *Enemies Oeconomy*. For he tells me, that even *Fighting is become a Trade*, and that your Men of Skill make no more of *demolishing brave Fellows*, than *Broughton* did of beating

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ing the *H*——, when he made the Tour of *Germany*, and for the Honour of his Country, established our *Reputation for Boxing* beyond question.

But I hear you are plaguely ill-used by your *Auxiliaries*, which puts me in mind of another Misfortune of mine. You know I was foolishly fond of *V—x H—l*, and such other Places, and fancied that these *Evening Diversions* would bring People together, and I should be the *better* for it. But alack-a-day there is nothing in it.

A *sauntering Rascal* ticks with me for a Dinner, and perhaps half a dozen Jellies, than whip he is gone to *R——gh*, and from thence the Devil knows where ; for I see no more of him, till the next time he's in *Distress* for a Beef-Steak and Oysters, and then he thinks it high time to come and

flam

flam over poor *Jenny*. Well : A Curse on *Mercenaries* say I, and Numbers of good People will say *Amen*.

Another Thought comes into my Head. I believe one great Cause of the *Dullness of Trade*, as well with me as my Betters, is the great *Scarcity of Money* ; and a great Scarcity there must be you will say, when Folk cannot find it for their *Pleasures*. Your *Pa-triots* and your *Puppies*, may rail as long as they will at *old Robin*, he was a good Coachman, and loved a *Smack of the Whip* to the last. In his time *Men of Pleasure flourish-ed*, and had wherewithal to *purchase their Pleasures*. Lack-a-day, when shall we see such Days a-gain ! Why, when he was alive it was the easiest thing in the World *to be happy*. There was no need of having what you call great
C *Talents* ;

Talents ; I have known Numbers of his *Counsellors* that had not more *Sense* than *myself* ; many of his *Heroes* that would never *fight* ; and some of his *Authors* that could scarce *write* their own Names. Yet he did for them *all*, and they did for *others* ; but then forsooth *Principles* came up again, and no-body was to have Salt to their Porridge, as we say in my Country, that *had not Abilities*. That I think was the Phrase ; and the very Thoughts of it makes me smile though in never so melancholy a Humour.

Well ! those *Men of Abilities* shall I never forget ; they were a new Race of People ; but, thank Heaven, they did not last long. Such Compounds as they were of *Formality* and *Folly*, of *solemn Looks* and *shallow Pates*, of *outside Professions* of more than *human*

man Virtue, and more rotten within than the most *weather-beaten of my Hackneys*, saw I never. It was a Toil to have any thing to *do* with them ; they were so *uncooth* in all their Humours, there was no bearing them ; even *Places* gave them no *Power*, and which is more wonderful, they could not *purchase Respect* even for their *Money*. My Damsels could not be commonly *civil* to them, while they were *emptying their Pockets* ; and for my Part it was always a Doubt with me, whether they made the *worst Figure* at C—— or in *Covent-Garden*.

When these were once gone, I thought *worse could* not come, and though I do not trouble myself much with *publick Affairs*, yet I remember I was mightily pleased with their going ; but a

Plague on them before they went they found such a way of *setting our Money a-going*, that one has scarce seen a Penny since ; and as if this had not been Injury enough, they have found a way of *spiriting off my best Customers*. Instead of a *Bowl and a Bona Roba*, every young Fellow, forthwith, must have his *Cockade first*, and then his *Equipage* ; so that all the *sly Pence* his Mamma has been *saving*, and of which two Thirds at least were my constant Perquisites, drop into the Pockets of *Smithfield Jockeys*, and the new-fashioned *Slop-Shops*, established for the fitting out these *Sons of Mars*, who with *greater Safety*, and perhaps *equal Fame*, might have continued *Votaries to Venus*.

I would not have you imagine I have picked up the *common Cant*,
and

and complain of *the want of Money*, to avoid the *Suspicion* of having more of it than my Neighbours, for I profess to you, that I am serious; and that I do not think Times were ever so *hard*, since I made a *Business of Pleasure*. It is a sad thing to think on, but in my Conscience, I believe some People pretend to *love Beer*, and are *bountiful* to their *Wives*, because they do not know how to *get at better Liquor and better Company*. Bless me, my ever honoured Patron, what *Revolutions* are we like to have, if *Poverty* should bring in *Virtue* amongst us! For my Part, I have settled a Resolution of *following the Money*, and if any Politician of your Acquaintance can but put me into the *right Road of coming up with it*, I can assure you it would be doing me a *singular Pleasure*;
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for I have so much of a *Patriot* in me, *that wherever the Money is, that shall be my Covent-Garden.*

Three Quarters of an Hour have I been writing by the Clock, that is, in the Author-like Strain, by the help of my A—ma—nu—what do you call it, and without the least Interruption. What sad Times are these? I have known the Day, when if I had been so disposed, I could not have found time from Noon to Night to say my Prayers. My *Afflictions* are *endless*. . My *old Customers* leave me to avoid *Dunning*, and I can get no *new ones*, because I cannot afford to give them *Credit*. Sometimes in a *Passion* I am ready to *burn my Books*, and very often in my *melancholy* I rob myself, by *drinking my own Liquors*. Well; surely, surely, things will go better

ter here and in *Flanders*; one thing I am pretty certain, that if you and your *Cronies* get once *Home* again, no *Laurels* would tempt you, even if they were as plenty abroad, as they are in poor *Folks Windows* about *Christmas*.

That Word revives my Hopes of seeing you once again; sure you will come Home to eat *Plumb-Porridge*; for without *WESTMINSTER PLUMB-PORRIDGE*, there will be no filling the Bellies of your *German Armies*. But, dear Sir, can't you bring a *Peace* in your Pocket: The Mob was certainly mad when they *bauled* for *War*, and truly you fitted them; for now they are as mad with that, as they were with *Peace*; and if they could but exchange them, I do not know what they would not give into the *Bargain*. You will wonder, how

I come to be so great a Politician, and yet, Sir, I have the best Title to it that can be, for I am made so by *Idleness*: for since I have had *nothing to do*, I am forced to listen to your News-Mongers, and to bear the *Smell of Coffee*. Necessity you know is without Law, and I who used to *register your Exploits at Home*, am forced to *hear* them at second-hand *now you are Abroad*. A melancholy thing indeed! Alack-a-day how I *trembled*, when I heard of the Artillery on the Redoubts and Retrenchments. Well! thought I to myself, who would ever get into the way of *masqued Batteries*, that could *spend* his time at a *Masquerade*; or be *exposed* to a worse *French Fire* than he may *meet with* in *Covent-Garden*. A *martial Spirit* shall stand in my *Pocket-Book* next to *Publick Spirit*;

Spirit ; and as long as I live I will take care to have nothing to do with any Man who *pretends* to either. There's a Maxim for you, Sir ; and perhaps as good a one as any that your *Turkish Machiavel*, your *Fatality-Monger*, can ever teach you.

But I was talking of *Politicians*, and I thought I had something more to say of them. You cannot imagine, my noble Captain, how little you are *obliged* to them. I thought they would have *compared* you every Day to *Alexander* and *Cæsar*, and I poked into I do not know how many Books to find out who these People were, for I knew no more of them than what my Nurse taught me of *Bruce* and *Wallace*, that is, that they were *always a fighting*, and had *mostly the better of it*. But my Learning has all been thrown
D away,

away, and I have not had an Opportunity of putting in a Word about *Cæsar* or *Alexander*, since I knew who they were. These *Politicians* have their Heads full of *Marlborough*, and one of them said t'other Day, *that a Prophet would have made a very scurvy Figure, who should have foretold that his Ten Years Conquests would have been lost in a single Campaign.* I do not know what he meant by it, but I dare say it was Mischief, because *all that heard him set up a Horse-laugh.*

We have had a mighty to do here about a *French Marshal* and his Brother. I think they said at first they were *Prisoners*; but at last, methinks, they treated them more like *Indian Kings.* I fancy these Folks are gone away with a *strange Opinion* of us, and perhaps you will hear of it. For my
part

part I can give no Account of them, but that some People were mighty *well-pleased* at their *coming*, grew *mighty sick* of their *staying*, and seem to be *mighty glad* they are *gone*. I thought your Politicians were a sort of People that could give a *Reason* for any thing ; but I could never get out of any of them the *least Reason* for this, except that these two *Frenchmen* were a sort of *Conjurers*, and it was feared would let themselves into our Circumstances by our *Looks* ; for I think it is agreed that they knew nothing of our *Language*. You see that I am got into a Road of telling you strange Stories, and silly ones too perhaps ; but do not be angry, for if you are you may possibly provoke me to tell you it is more *your Fault* than *mine* ; why did not you send us Home

some News that was *worth talking* of, and then we should not have minded TRIFLES.

To be sure you would be glad of some Entertainment in these *bad Times*, a *little Scandal* or so, but a lack-a-Day you have carried *Scandal* with you ; and the *Adventure* that cost you a *Black Eye*, is the the last I have heard of worth mentioning ; and let me tell you, I was as angry about that as *any body*. I cannot conceive what any *Pupil of mine* has to do with *honest Women*. Are there not *willing ones* enough, but *young Fellows* must go to *scratching* and *tearing*, and getting themselves *marked* ; which was not only an ill *Sign* but an ill *Omen* ; for if I am not mistaken you have had your *bellyful* of *beating* ever since ; while the Honour of your Antagonist is as
bright

bright as ever. You see, Sir, by this I have not spent my time ill with the Politicians, since I have been able to turn one Instance of your *high Mettle at Home*, into a sort of Alle—how do you call it, *History of your Adventures Abroad*.

But to own the *fair Truth*, I would not have given you this *Pain*, if I had known how to give you *Pleasure*. But as for *amorous History* there is no such thing. I believe for my part there is no *Spirit* left in the Nation. Not so much as an *old Woman*, overtaken in a Fit of *Fondness* for her *Footman*. No *married Dame* has *eloped*; nor *unmarried one* discovered her *Knowledge of Mysteries*, to which she should have been a *Stranger*. I have racked my Brain this half Hour for a
single

single Tale, and that too but a poor one. In short, they say, that a certain *old Parson* is married at an Age, when he had more need to have thought of a *Shroud* than a *Shift* ; by which he has plainly shewn, that where-ever *other Folks Concerns* be, his *Thoughts* are tied to the very last to this *World*. Whether this Tale will ever beget a better I do not know, but in this I am clear, that if it does not, there will be *no other Issue of this Marriage*.

But, perhaps you are *over-stock-ed* with Intrigues abroad, and therefore have the less Stomach to such sort of Adventures from hence. If that be the Case, pray *treasure* them up in your *Memory*, and let us have them *dressed* in all the *Charms* of your *Eloquence* when you return. As
you

you have spent so little time in *fighting*, there must have been a great deal of leisure left for *Love*; and *Brussels* I have heard, in the Days of the Elector of *Bavaria* (I think there was such a Prince) was a Place of *great Gallantry*. Methinks, I should be pleased to have it *recorded* to *succeeding Times*, for the *Exploits* in the same way of another *great Man*. But for ONE to *visit Foreign Places*, and *leave behind* no *Testimonies* of *Prowess*, either of *SWORD* or *SPEAR*, would be a *melancholy* thing indeed, and altogether unworthy of a *Knight*, whose very *Order* puts him in mind of *some thing near the Seat of Pleasure*.

It is now near *Nine o'Clock* and not a *Soul* in the *House* worth *speaking to*. I dare say, I have
tired

tired you, but no Matter for that, why should not I *plague* you, as well as be *plagued* myself, especially when I have no other *Hope* of getting rid of these *Plagues*, but by *seeing* you again ; and let me tell you the *sooner* the *better* both for you and I. *Covent-Garden* will I fancy, be as good *Winter-Quarters* as you can wish, and as bad as the Times go, we shall be able to find those, that will be able to make you *forget* all your *Fatigues*, and perhaps *inspire* you with *Courage* to *undergo* fresh *Labours*. Lack-a-day, how we old Women *prate*, especially of things we should *not* *prate* of. But there is an Age of *saying*, as well as *doing*, and when we are past one *sort* of *Pleasure*, we must take up with another, though of a lower kind. This is another
Stroke

Stroke of *Philosophy*, a Maxim that may not be for your Use *at present*, but you do not know how soon you *may come to it*; and therefore if there be an *empty Place* in your *Head* put it there, and when you are *wanton* only in *Stories*, remember the *saying* of poor *Fenny*.

Well! *one! two! three Chairs* have just *sat down*; I vow I believe it is *lucky* to *write* to you; I doubt this will encourage me to trouble you *every Post*, but that I am told it will be *a long time* before *my Letters* come to hand, especially now the plaguy *French* are Masters of ——. But never mind it, the very *Noise* of these *Chairs*, has *banished* all Sorrow from my Mind, as it would do from yours if you were here. Bless me what a Difference; instead of
 E *Grassins*;

Grassins; I think that's the Name
 of the Ragamuffins, to see the
Play-house Links, and to have
 no Enemies to deal with, but such
 as are in *Silk and Satin*; there
 would be a Change! a Change
 that poor *Jenny* longs to see. But
 these Chairs so run in my Head
 that I can write no longer; I must
 positively go see what they will
 produce; *Rack and Jellies* are al-
 ready called for; GREAT SIR,
 excuse me; a truer and heartier
 Friend you have not left behind
 you here. Well! Blessings at-
 tend you, may you have some
Back Stroke of Fortune, and return
 in high Spirits. I vow, I think, the
Summer has wept for you; *Ra-*
nelagh and *Vaux-Hall*, knew not
 which to mourn most, the want of
 your Presence, or that of the
Sun. After so bright a Compli-
 ment

ment it is high time to conclude,
and though I cannot do it in
Form, yet *Sincerity* is a *better*
thing than *Compliment* ; and so the
poor Man's Blessing be with you,
as constantly as the good Wishes
of

Your most humble

and dutiful poor Servant,

J. D.

(27)

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